

GUIDE TO ALLERGY ALERT TESTING AND COLOUR PRODUCTS

'How to use card'

For Salons/ Barbershops & Freelance Hairdressers/ Barbers

Introduction

The many hair colouring products on the market, made by different manufacturers, are covered by strict safety laws. However, it is possible that a small number of people may experience an allergic reaction to colouring products, just as some people can react to certain foods. Hair colorant manufacturers provide instructions for use, which usually includes performing an allergy alert test at least 48 hours before colouring the hair.

Hair colorants

The hair dye PPD (paraphenylenediamine or p-phenylenediamine) is most often associated with allergic reactions to hair colorants.

PPD is used in permanent hair colours and is needed for almost all shades, but especially the darker shades. Almost all permanent hair colorants contain a PPD-type hair dye because they are the best way to achieve permanent hair colour and they are the only way of successfully colouring grey hair.

All cosmetic products must carry a list of ingredients on-pack. PPD will be labelled as 'paraphenylenediamine'. When a hair colorant contains PPD, or a related hair dye, the product also has to be labelled with 'contains phenylenediamines' or 'contains phenylenediamines (toluenediamines)'.

There is a legal requirement for cosmetic products and their ingredients to be strictly assessed for safety by an independent assessor before they can go on the market. The use of PPD is therefore strictly regulated and it is only approved for use in hair colorants. It is approved by the 28 EU member states and the USA.

Why it's important to carry out allergy alert tests

While the vast majority of people who have their hair coloured experience no problems at all, it is known that a small number of people do have the potential to become allergic to some ingredients in hair colorants.

It is possible to develop an allergy to PPD and similar products over time, without realising. So even if clients have used hair colours before, whether done at home or applied professionally, they can develop an allergic reaction that they may not have had in the past.

These cases are rare but an Allergy Alert Test is an important precaution and indicates that the client may have a reaction if you go on to colour their hair.

How to use the card

By following the steps on the Allergy Alert Consultation and Colour Record Card as part of your client consultation, you will be able determine if you can colour your client's hair immediately or if you need to carry out an Allergy Alert Test.

Cards must be kept for 2 years.

New clients or first colour treatment

The first column ("Initial Allergy Alert Test") is for a new client. You must perform an Allergy Alert Test 2 days (48 hours) before their first colour and record the outcome.

Some clients take medication for allergies (e.g. hayfever) which suggests they may be slightly more likely to develop allergies. The latest version of the card includes a question asking if the client is taking medications for allergies. If they answer YES to this question, you should do an Allergy Alert Test. Even if they answer NO, if this is their first colour treatment, you need to do an Allergy Alert Test anyway.

Some allergies are seasonal, for example hayfever, so your client may only take medications in spring/summer. This means that even if the client isn't taking medication for allergies the first time they have a colour treatment, they could be taking medication when they visit your salon again.

That's why you need to ask if clients are taking medication for allergies EACH time they visit. If they are taking medication you'll need to do an Allergy Alert Test.

If the client is under 16 or answers YES to any of the questions in the box, you must advise you cannot continue with the colour application.

If you have advised a client to 'seek medical advice', try to avoid causing alarm and explain that your client needs to ask if the allergies they suffer from are likely to increase their risk of a reaction to hair colorants. If your client returns saying their doctor or medical professional has said their hair can be coloured, it is important to make a record of this and to perform the Allergy Alert Test before proceeding with any colour.

Repeat visits

For clients' repeat visits you must ask the questions in column 2 ("Repeat Allergy Alert Test"), follow the directions and record the details.

Annual Allergy Alert Tests

Since an allergy can take time to develop, an Allergy Alert Test must be carried out annually as indicated in the third column ("Allergy Alert Test") and again a record must be kept.

Tattoos

PPD is sometimes used illegally in so-called 'black henna' temporary tattoos. This can lead to a strong reaction to otherwise safe products such as hair colorants which also contain PPD. This is why the card includes questions about 'black henna' temporary tattoos as they can increase the allergy risk, even if the client did not experience any reaction at the time, and some years after they have been applied.

Certain substances found in some skin permanent or other temporary tattoos, and also possibly permanent make-up, may cause an allergic reaction. This could put your client at an increased risk of a reaction when they have a hair colour. Therefore you need to check that it is safe to proceed by carrying out the Allergy Alert Test prior to colouring.

Under 16s

You will start to see all permanent hair colorants and some direct colours carrying the warning that they are not intended for use on children under the age of 16. This is not because of any safety issue, but is to help ensure that children do not use these products as they might not pay attention to the warnings and instructions for use. This is particularly important for home kits. If you apply colour using products which state 'not intended for use on children under the age of 16' this is contrary to the manufacturer's instructions which would invalidate your insurance. If you have any questions on this, it is important that you contact the manufacturer and also your insurer.

Brand and products

'Brand' means the manufacturer and 'brand product range' means individual ranges of colour products from the specific manufacturer. Different brands or brand product ranges may contain different ingredients. That's why it is important to test each time your client changes to a different brand or brand product range.

After 12 months

If it has been more than 12 months since you last did an allergy alert test on a client, even if your client has not changed brand, product range or colour, you must still do a test. You cannot use a colour application as a substitute for doing an Allergy Alert Test. You should explain that you're doing a test for their own protection – many clients are completely unaware that allergies can build up over time. It also ensures that you are complying with manufacturer's instructions and insurance requirements.

Testing

The Allergy Alert Test must be done 2 days (48 hours) before the colour is applied because it can take up to 48 hours for an allergic reaction to develop. If you cut corners, you risk missing a reaction.

If you know which brand and shade you will be applying you should use this to carry out the Allergy Alert Test. If you do not know which shade you will be applying, you should choose the darkest shade from the chosen brand product range (where 'brand' means the manufacturer and 'brand product range' means individual ranges of colouring products from that specific manufacturer). Remember, different brand product ranges may contain different ingredients which is why it is important to test each time your client changes to a different brand product range.

Always follow the manufacturers' instructions when carrying out the Allergy Alert Test, which means you will usually be using the specific brand product range.

If you have any questions then contact the manufacturer. If in any doubt, always do an Allergy Alert Test.

Appointments: Hair Salons/ Barbershops

To avoid disappointing your clients, you or your Front of House can ask the questions in column 2 to check if an Allergy Alert Test will be needed for repeat clients who are booking in for colour or highlights. Staff should explain that this is an important precaution to safeguard their health and arrange for testing to be done 2 days beforehand.

Reactions

Remember if your client reacts to the Allergy Alert Test (such as reddening, itching or swelling in or around the test area), do **not** go on to colour the hair. Contact the manufacturer and recommend that your client seeks medical advice before any further colour applications are made.

Chair Renters/ Freelance Individuals

The card applies to the Policyholder, whether that is a Salon/ Barbershop or Freelance Hairdresser/ Barber **who is insured via Just Hair Insurance**. Anyone not insured by Just Hair Insurance is not covered when using this card/ guidelines and must contact their own insurance broker/ company for clarification when skin testing. Speak to Just Hair Insurance for more details or visit www.Just-Hair-Insurance.co.uk

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1 **Does the test have to be done exactly 48 hours in advance?**

It must be done at least 48 hours in advance. The test can be done up to a maximum of 5 days in advance so, for example if a customer has a test on Friday but can't come back into the salon until Tuesday, that's fine - as long as they have not had additional colour treatments, tattoos or permanent make-up or a reaction to the allergy alert test in the meantime.

2 **Can hair dye cause cancer?**

Hair colorants for hairdressers and consumers are safe and have been extensively assessed for safety. Scientific bodies regularly review scientific studies on hair colorants and no link has been found between the use of hair colorants and any type of cancer. There is no scientific evidence for a causal link between hair colouring and cancer.

3 **Should I wear gloves to apply hair colorants?**

Yes, this is advisable mainly because it prevents hands getting stained and protects against dermatitis, not because it is unsafe to get hair colorant on your hands.

4 **Is it OK to colour hair if a customer is pregnant or breastfeeding?**

It is perfectly safe to colour hair if a customer is pregnant or breastfeeding – just ask the questions on the card, as you would normally would, to decide whether or not you need to do an Allergy Alert Test. As always, if you are not sure then do an Allergy Alert Test following manufacturers' instructions. However, some women can be extremely concerned about colouring their hair at this time and for them it is better to avoid the source of anxiety and not have their hair coloured – even though there are no safety concerns from the colouring itself.

5 **What about eyelash or eyebrow tinting?**

If the eyelash or eyebrow product recommends that an Allergy Alert Test be performed, then the questionnaire approach can also be applied. You will still need to ask the questions as set out on the card to decide whether you need to do an Allergy Alert Test. As always, if you are not sure then do an Allergy Alert Test, following manufacturers' instructions.

6 **If someone uses a home colouring kit is it true that they have to throw away the hair dye after doing an allergy alert test and buy another one to do the treatment?**

No, it's fine to use the same product (even if it has been opened) after 48 hours, provided the individual has not reacted to the Allergy Alert Test.

7 Who is covered to use the record cards?

All trained/qualified personnel (Salons/ Barbershops including Freelance Individuals/ Chair Renters) are covered if you have insurance from Just Hair Insurance, for everyone else you will need to check their insurances.

8 How long to do I need to keep the cards for?

Cards must be kept for 2 years.

9 Are electronic versions of the card available?

SalonGenius software includes the full suite of Allergy Alert Test questions as confirmed by the NHF. Contact them on 01202 311826 for details. We are in constant contact with other salon software companies and will let clients know the availability.

10 Is there more detailed information about health and safety of salon hair products?

Yes, CTPA and the Hairdressing and Beauty Suppliers Association (HBSA) produce a Guide to the Health and Safety of Salon Hair Products.

How to Obtain Allergy Alert Consultation and Record Cards

A copy of the Allergy Alert Consultation and Colour Record Card and Use Guidelines are available to view and download from our website www.Just-Hair-Insurance.co.uk

Insurance enquiries

For insurance enquiries please contact:

Just Hair Insurance on 01923 894360 or get a quote online

Email info@just-hair-insurance.co.uk

Web: www.just-hair-insurance.co.uk



Remember, Just Hair Insurance have an agreement with underwriters who have approved the Allergy Alert Consultation and Colour Record Cards – If you use ANY other insurance broker you must check with them what their guidelines are on allergy testing and recording and adhere to these, otherwise your insurance policy could be invalidated.